

PATENT  
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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

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for

**CORD AND STRAP COMBINATION SHOE CLOSURE**

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Title Of Invention

**CORD AND STRAP COMBINATION SHOE CLOSURE**

Prior Application

[0001] Applicant claims priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/393,968 filed July 5, 2002 and under 35 U.S.C. §120 as a continuation-in-part of U.S. Design Patent Application Serial No 29/183,107 filed June 5, 2003.

Field Of The Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to shoe closure apparatus and method. More particularly, the present invention relates to a shoe closure apparatus and method that offers several combinations of closure.

Background Of The Invention

[0003] Various shoe closure means are known. Shoes closures, typically using Velcro® hook and loop fasteners, have been developed to replace or reinforce/augment traditional shoe-lace closures on all varieties of shoes, whether athletic, orthopedic, or everyday-wear shoes. When totally or partially replacing laces, a Velcro® hook and loop fastener provides ease of fastening for those who may have difficulty due to age or limited use of their hands. When used in conjunction with laces, Velcro® hook and loop fasteners typically cinch and add additional support to certain areas of the foot, such as the arch or serve to cover and maintain the laces as a fail-safe. This requires that the Velcro®

hook and loop fastener, such as a strap, be fixedly attached to the shoe. Example of this is seen in U.S. Patent No. 4,114,297 to Famolare, Jr. and U.S. Patent No. 4,308,672 to Antonious. These closure means are used to totally or partially eliminate laces and are fixed to the shoe itself. Their use is not optional. This does not give the wearer more than one option when fastening closed their shoes.

[0004] While Velcro® hook and loop fastener straps have been used in conjunction with or to replace traditional shoe-lace closures, there remains a need for a closure apparatus which allows the wearer to choose from several closure varieties. There remains a need for strap closures which are removable from the shoe itself and allows the wearer the option of using them.

#### Summary Of The Invention

[0005] A footwear closure assembly comprises a plurality of eyelets disposed in said footwear, a cord received by said eyelets, at least one pair of slots disposed in said footwear adjacent to said eyelets, and at least one strap, each strap received by said one pair of slots in installed position, and each strap having fasteners at each of its ends disposed on opposite surfaces of said ends.

#### Brief Description Of The Drawings

[0006] FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a cord and strap combination shoe closure in accordance with the present invention.

[0007] FIG. 2 is front perspective view thereof, showing the strap in closed position.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a front elevational view thereof, showing the strap in closed position

[0009] FIG. 4 is a front perspective view thereof, showing the cord removed and the strap in open position.

[00010] FIG. 5 is a front perspective view thereof, showing the strap in closed position.

[00011] FIG. 6 is a front perspective view thereof, showing the cord in closed position and the strap removed.

[00012] FIG. 7 is a front perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention, showing the cord in closed position and the strap removed.

[00013] FIG. 8 is a front perspective view thereof, showing the strap in open position over the cord.

[00014] FIG. 9 is a front perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention showing the cord in closed position and the straps in open position.

#### Detailed Description Of The Drawings

[0010] The present invention provides a combination cord and strap combination shoe closure as illustrated in FIGS. 1-9. Shoes made according to the invention include holes, loops or other means for attaching removable cords, or attaching removable straps, or attaching removable straps and removable cords for closing a shoe about a wearer's foot.

[0011] FIG.1 shows generally a shoe 10 with a closure assembly including a cord 20 and strap 30. Both the cord 20 and strap 30 are removable and may be used in various combinations to achieve closure of any type of shoe, such as orthopedic shoes, athletic sneakers, sandals, and other footwear requiring a closure or cinching assembly to secure it to the wearer's foot.

[0012] Cord 20 is threaded through lace-holes or eyelets 14 disposed in the upper 12 of the shoe 10 in its installed position. Cord 20 may be a shoe-lace, ribbon, or the like that may be tied, knotted or otherwise clamped or cinched into a closed position.

[0013] Strap 30 is slid through slots or grommets 16 disposed in the upper 12, adjacent to eyelets 14, 10. In an installed position, strap 30 is positioned through upper 12 via grommets 16. Strap 30 may be made of leather, vinyl, nylon, cloth, canvas or any other suitable material. Strap includes a fastener such as a Velcro® hoop and loop fastener disposed at each end region 32, 34 on opposite sides of strap 30 so that strap 30 may be folded over on itself and fastened into its closed position, as shown in FIG. 2. A Velcro® hook and loop fastener allows for strap 30 to be folded upon itself, with adjustment for more or less overlap at end regions 32, 34, and control over the extent that strap 30 closes or cinches shoe 10 and/or supports the foot therein. It is understood that other coupling materials such as snaps, buckles, hooks and eyes, and the like could also be used to secure strap 30 to itself and/or to upper 12 for closing shoe 10.

[0014] Strap 30 at least partially, and may entirely, cover cord 20 depending on relative adjacent placement of eyelets 14 and grommets 16 within the upper 12 of the shoe 10. Eyelets 14 and grommets 16 may be placed

accordingly within the upper 12 to provide the desired support to a particular area of the foot.

[0015] In FIG. 2, cord 20 and strap 30 are both in a closed position to secure the shoe to wearer's foot and to provide to the wearer the necessary support and/or the desired closure style.

[0016] FIG. 3 shows shoe 12, from the front. Strap 30 in installed position has been threaded through eyelets 14. Strap 30 in an installed position has been slid through grommets 16, underneath strap 20, and folded upon itself to be attached at its end regions 32, 34.

[0017] FIG. 4 shows cord 20 removed and strap 30 slid through grommets 16 in an installed, but open, position. While eyelets 14 are disposed in upper 12 and provide the option of additionally using cord or lace, closure of shoe may be achieved by strap 30 alone.

[0018] FIG. 5 shows strap 30 in a closed position. Eyelets 14 may at least partially remain visible but are largely covered by strap 30 in a closed position.

[0019] FIG. 6 shows strap 30 removed and cord 20 in a closed position. In this embodiment, cord 20 alone is used to close shoe 10. While grommets 16 are disposed in upper 12 and provide the option of additionally engaging a strap, closure of shoe may be achieved by cord 20 alone.

[0020] FIG. 7 shows another embodiment of the present invention. Cord 20 is held in a closed position by cinch lock 22, rather than being tied or knotted. Loops 18 are fixedly attached to upper 12 to receive strap 30. It is understood that other strap-receiving devices such as D-rings may be fixed to upper 12.

[0021] FIG. 8 shows strap 30 in an installed position. Strap 30 has been slid through loops 18 and rests on top of and covers cord 20. FIG. 9 shows a front view of this embodiment, with strap 30 in closed position covering cord 20.

[0022] FIG. 9 shows another embodiment of the present invention with multiple removable straps slid through multiple sets of grommets in installed but open position. First set of grommets 40, 42 receives first strap 44, and second set of grommets 50, 52 receives second strap 54. Straps 44, 54 are disposed through upper 12 via their respective grommets, 40, 42, 50, 52. Alternatively, multiple straps may be received by multiple sets of loops or D-rings disposed in upper 12. Straps 44, 54 are removable and one or both may be used to close shoe, by themselves or in addition to cord 20.

[0023] The various closure combinations possible allow the wearer to modify shoe closure at any time. Use of cord/lace alone provides a conventional shoe closure. Use of strap alone allows for easy closure without lacing, tying, and knotting. Use of cord and strap in combination provides extra support and closure assembly that has been doubly secured. A single shoe style meets the demand for both cord/lace closure and strap closure shoes.

[0024] As both cord and strap are removable, they may be customized by different cords, laces or ribbons, and straps of varying materials and styles for aesthetic, customized purposes, or to provide orthopedic comfort or the desired degree of support for the particular activity in which the wearer is engaged.